(c) and (d) Every effort has been made but the nature of the terrain makes it difficult to cover all points.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The Government have taken a number of administrative measures to contain the militant activities and the inflow of arms & ammunitions from across the border which include better border management and beefing up of intelligence set up and a relentless pressure on the militants by the security forces.

Pension Scheme for Journalists and non-journalists

*128. KUMARI SAYEEDA KHATUN:
SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the widespread concern among working journalists and other employees of newspapers and news-agencies because of delay in implementation of a pension scheme for which the experts group had submitted its scheme about two years ago;

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to expedite the same; and

(c) whether government propose to enact a legislation for providing pension to journalists as an interim measure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN): (a) to (c) The Government has been seized of the question of providing a pension scheme *inter-alia* for working journalists and other employees of newspapers and news agencies in the wider framwork of the Employees' Provident Fund. The report of the Expert Group had been further examined with a view to improve on the quantum of pension and the proposals are now pending consideration of the Central Board of Trustees of E.P.F. The amendment of the Provident Fund Act to provide for such scheme will thereafter be taken up by the Government.

Higher cost of manufactured goods in the country

*129. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRI SOM PAL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have compared the cost of our manufactured goods with that of the developed countries, manufacturing the same categories of goods;

(b) whether our costs are higher than those prevailing in developed countries, if so, to what extent and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that our country's labour is the cheapest in the world; and

(d) if so, what are reasons for the higher manufacturing cost in the industries using advanced technology in the same scale of the economy as comparable with developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) to (d) Studies conducted by the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices covering selected industrial sub-sectors reveal that the overall manufacturing costs range between half to three times those prevailing in developed countries. Among the manufactured goods with higher costs of production are: certain capital goods, electronics, synthetic rubber and synthetic fibres. Light chemicals, electrical machinery and jute products have comparatively lower costs of manufacture.

THE country-wise information on the labour costs of manufacture on uniform basis is not available.

The higher costs of manufacture are attributable to higher prices of inputs and capital goods, higher duties and levies, supply bottlenecks, procedural delays, administered pricing policies and idle capacities Non-price factors such as inadequate R & D activities, managerial inefficienes and lack of quality control also contribute to higher costs.